

# Suicide Cues in the Elderly

---

## **VERBAL CLUES:**

- "I'm going to kill myself"
- "I want to end it all"
- "I just want out"
- "You would be better off without me"
- "I'm such a burden"
- "I'm useless now"
- "I have nothing left to live for"

## **BEHAVIOURAL CLUES:**

- Purchasing a weapon
- Stockpiling pills
- Donating body to a medical school
- Sudden interest in putting personal & business affairs in order, e.g. making or changing a will, taking out insurance or changing beneficiaries, making funeral plans, giving away money and/or possessions
- Sudden interest or disinterest in church or religion

## **SITUATIONAL CLUES:**

- Recent move or suggestion of move to a care facility
- Death of a spouse
- Diagnosis of terminal illness
- Flare-up with relative or friend

---

## **RESPONDING TO VERBAL CLUES ABOUT SUICIDE:**

You can ask openly:

"Have you ever thought about hurting yourself?"



If the answer is yes, ask:

"Do you have a plan to hurt yourself?"

"Have you picked a date?"



If the answer is yes, tell the person:

"I'm concerned. Can we find someone you can talk to about it?"

"What can I do to help/make you feel safe?"

"Who do you feel you can talk to about this?"



If the person asks you to keep it a secret tell them:

"It is too serious for me to keep this a secret."

Or "I care about you too much not to tell anyone this secret."



Report immediately to your supervisor!